

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
27 September 2001 (27.09.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 01/70483 A1**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **B29C 47/00**,  
55/28, 69/00 // B29K 1:00

(74) Agents: **MCCALLUM, William, Potter et al.**; Cruik-  
shank & Fairweather, 19 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow  
G1 3AE (GB).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB01/00851

(22) International Filing Date: 1 March 2001 (01.03.2001)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
0006524.3 18 March 2000 (18.03.2000) GB

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **DEVRO**  
PLC [GB/GB]; Moodiesburn, Chryston, Glasgow G69 0JE  
(GB).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **HENDRIKS, Ivo**,  
G. [BE/BE]; Hoevenstraat 95, B-3900 Overpelt (BE).  
**HENDRIKX, Roger, H.** [BE/BE]; Schoenmakersweg 1,  
B-3520 Zonhoven (BE). **BECKERS, Stefan, D.** [BE/BE];  
Panhovenstraat 19, B-3941 Hechtel-Eksel (BE). **VRI-  
JSEN, Mark** [BE/BE]; Bremstraat 42, B-3520 Zonhoven  
(BE). **HELLEMANS, Dirk, M.** [BE/BE]; Lange Ven-  
straat 38A, B-3128 Baal (BE).

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,  
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,  
CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM,  
HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK,  
LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX,  
MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL,  
TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

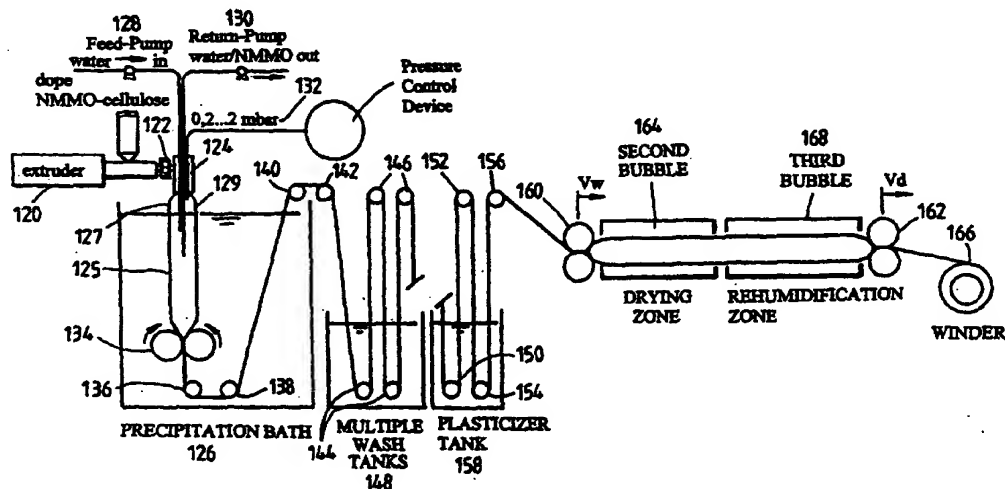
(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM,  
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian  
patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European  
patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE,  
IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF,  
CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-  
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-  
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: DOUBLE BUBBLE PROCESS FOR MANUFACTURING ORIENTATED CELLULOSE FILMS



(57) Abstract: This application relates to producing biaxially stretched tubular cellulose films for the food industry. In particular, the biaxial stretching is obtained by using rollers to stretch the casings longitudinally and to use increased air pressure inside the films to radially stretch the casings. The obtained product may also be cut to provide longitudinal strips for the production of smaller tubular films.

WO 01/70483 A1

## DOUBLE BUBBLE PROCESS FOR MANUFACTURING ORIENTATED CELLULOSE FILMS

This invention relates to tubular food casings such as those commonly used for encasing foods such as sausages. More particularly, this invention relates to using biaxially stretched material in the manufacture of tubular food casings.

Cellulose tubular films are used in the food industry for casings, primarily for meat products such as sausages. Typically, cellulose tubular films such as cellulose casings have been made for many years according to the viscose process. This process is more than a century old and has been used commercially for about 95 years. In this process, cellulose is typically taken from one source, derivatised, then solubilised and then articles are formed by extruding a solubilised derivatised cellulose into fibres, sheets or tubes. Reforming the cellulose is carried out via a process called regeneration.

The basic raw material for cellulose casings is cellulose pulp which usually comes from wood pulp. Other major raw materials used in the viscose process are carbon disulphide, sodium hydroxide, sulphuric acid and a plasticising agent. The viscose preparation process is a complicated process and usually requires multiple separate steps before the solubilised cellulose is ready to be used in the manufacture of a cellulose product. Although the viscose process has generally worked well, separation time from steeping to extrusion is a considerable disadvantage, as is the use of various raw materials which give rise to disposal problems and other potential pollution and associated environmental problems.

The new process which has become popular and is replacing the viscose process involves the creation of a special type of extrusion solution called "dope" instead of viscose. Dope is a solution of cellulose dissolved in tertiary amine oxide and water. The preferred tertiary

amine oxide is NMMO (N-methyl morpholine N-oxide). One advantage of using this solvent is that it is able to dissolve cellulose without having to derivatise it first, as was required in the viscose process using materials such as carbon disulphide. A second advantage of the amine-oxide process is that once solubilised, the cellulose can be precipitated from the dope as a regenerated product by contacting the dope with a precipitation liquid, typically water which is a non-solvent for cellulose but a solvent for NMMO. A further advantage is that the process time before extrusion is significantly reduced. A yet further advantage is that much less raw materials are required and the NMMO solvent together with excess water, used in the processes during the precipitation and washing stage, can be recycled and reused.

US Patent 4,556,708 describes a non-reinforced sausage casing which has certain minimal tear strength in both longitudinal and transverse directions. However, such strengths are not as high as desired relative to their cross-sectional areas. Shrink and stretch properties are also poor.

US Patent 4,940,614 similarly describes a tubular material seamed parallel to a longitudinal axis by means of an adhesive tape. Again the strength of the cellulose based material is not as high as desired relative to the cross-sectional area. Shrink and stretch properties are also not as good as desired.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a method and apparatus for producing extruded blown tubular film wherein further strength is imparted to the tubular film.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method and apparatus for biaxially stretching an extruded blown tubular film.

According to a first aspect of the present invention

there is provided a method for producing biaxially stretched extruded cellulose based tubular film wherein the tubular film is extruded from an extrusion die and sequentially transporting the tubular film through a liquid precipitation bath and a dryer, said method comprising the steps of:

5  
10  
15  
20  
25  
locating the extrusion die above the liquid precipitation bath having a precipitation liquid level therein to provide a gap between an extrusion nozzle outlet of the extrusion die and the surface of the precipitation liquid in the liquid bath;  
extruding a blown tubular film from the extrusion die so that a bubble is formed in the gap between the extrusion nozzle outlet and the liquid precipitation bath and wherein there is increased air pressure within the bubble;  
pulling the tubular film away from the extrusion die and into the precipitation bath using a set of rollers;  
precipitating the blown tubular film in said liquid precipitation bath; and  
wherein the film is transported via further sets of rollers to form at least one further bubble, between a set of rollers, where the tubular film is further stretched to impart additional strength to the film.

30  
Preferably, the tubular film is cellulose based and is formed by adding cellulose to a water diluted NMMO solution to form a suspension, wherein the suspension is heated and the water evaporated under reduced pressure to form NMMO monohydrate which dissolves the cellulose to form a dope solution containing cellulose, NMMO-monohydrate and water.

It is preferred if nip rolls are used to stretch the

tubular film.

Preferably, the nip rolls terminating the first bubble rotate faster than the rate of extrusion from the extrusion die so that there is a longitudinal tension in the tubular cellulose film.

Preferably, the air pressure in the first bubble use 0.1 to 5mbar.

Preferably, a second bubble in the tubular film is formed after it has been washed in wash tanks and plasticiser tanks.

Preferably, the film is formed into three bubbles prior to being wound on a drum. Preferably, the cellulose film in a wet condition is stretched by nip rolls longitudinally and radially by increased air pressure; and in the third bubble the pressure inside the film is increased.

Alternatively, the film in a wet condition is stretched by nip rolls longitudinally and radially by increased air pressure; and the third bubble the pressure inside the film is decreased.

A further alternative is for the cellulose film to be dried and stretched by nip rolls longitudinally by and radially by increased air pressure; and the third bubble is rewetted and further stretched between nip rolls and by using increased air pressure.

Furthermore, it is preferred if the second bubble has a set of nip rolls at both ends of the bubble and wherein the set of nip rolls first in contact with the tubular film rotate slower than the second set of nip rolls whereby a longitudinal tension is created in the film. Alternatively, a holding/accumulator tank is located between each set of rollers.

Preferably, the air pressure inside the second bubble is 50 to 800mbar.

Preferably, the tube is stretched by a total of 20-

1500% in the longitudinal direction and 20-2000% in the transverse direction.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided apparatus for producing biaxially stretched extruded cellulose based tubular film of improved strength wherein the apparatus contains an extrusion die above a liquid bath having a liquid level therein to provide a gap between the die and the surface of the liquid in the liquid bath wherein the film is extruded into a first bubble and pulled via a set of rollers and wherein the film undergoes a process of being pulled through further rollers between which film bubbles are formed which exert further biaxial forces on the tubular film.

Preferably, the rollers are nip rolls.

According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a biaxially stretched tubular cellulose based film as described herein.

Preferably, the tubular cellulose based film is cut into a plurality of biaxially stretched strips and the biaxially stretched strips are seamed to form a smaller dimensioned tubular film. The seams are conveniently formed by using tape such as adhesive tape, heat sealing tape or any other suitable adhesive means.

Advantageously, the cuts are parallel with a longitudinal axis of the formed tubular film. Alternatively, the seams are helical with respect to the formed tubular film.

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of a conventional NMMO-cellulose dope processing unit;

Figure 2 is a schematic representation of an NMMO-cellulose dope processing unit comprising a double bubble and further nip rolls;

Figure 3 is a schematic representation of an NMMO - cellulose dope processing unit comprising a triple bubble;

Figure 4 is a schematic representation of the second and third bubble in Figure 3 wherein the cellulose casing is pre-stretched in the second bubble and relaxed or fixated during drying in the third bubble;

Figure 5 is a schematic representation of the second and third bubble in Figure 3 wherein the cellulose casing is pre-stretched in the second bubble and stretched during drying in the third bubble;

Figure 6 is a schematic representation of the second and third bubble in Figure 3 wherein the cellulose casing is dried in the second bubble and then rewetted in the third bubble;

Figure 7 shows a tubular film with longitudinal edges wherein the edges abut each other;

Figure 8 shows a tubular film with longitudinal edges wherein the longitudinal edges overlap;

Figure 9 shows a tubular film with longitudinal edges wherein the longitudinal edges are face-to-face;

Figure 10 shows a tubular film wherein the film is seamed in a helical form; and

Figure 11 is a schematic representation of a further tubular film.

Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a typical representation of an extrusion process. NMMO-cellulose dope is fed into an extruder 20 at an extrusion temperature of about 100°C and transported through a filter screen (not shown) to a gear metering pump section, shown generally at 22.

The metering pump section 22 feeds an extrusion die 24 which has a die outlet in the shape of an annular nozzle. The die outlet is directed downwardly to face a precipitation bath, shown generally at 26. Bath 26 is separated from die 24 by an air gap.

Tubular cellulose casing 25 is precipitated in bath 26 which contains a precipitation liquid, usually water, at a temperature in a range of 10-20°C.

5 A volume of water is provided to the interior of the tubular cellulose casing 25 via a feed pump supply means and conduit, shown generally at 28, which precipitates the interior of the cellulose casing 25.

10 Excess water NMMO solution (containing possible minor additives) is withdrawn from the interior of the cellulose casing 25 via a conduit 30 and pump. Section 27 of the casing 25 which lies in the air gap between the bath 26 and the extrusion die 24 is pressurised internally with air at a pressure of between 0.2 to 2mbar above atmospheric pressure. The increased air pressure is supplied via  
15 pressure control means, shown generally at 32.

After the tubular cellulose casing 25 has precipitated in the precipitation bath 26, the tubular cellulose casing 25 is flattened and pulled through nip rolls 34. A first bubble 29 is therefore created in the casing 25 between the  
20 extrusion die 24 and the nip rolls 34. The nip rolls 34 rotate faster than the rate of extrusion from the extrusion die 24. There is, therefore, a tension in the longitudinal direction of the tubular cellulose casing 25 due to the pulling force of the nip rolls 34. There is also a tension  
25 in the transverse direction due to the pressurised air in section 27 of the casing 25.

After passing the cellulose casing 25 through the nip rolls 34, the casing 25 is wound about a set of rollers 36, 38, 40. The cellulose casing 25 then exits the  
30 precipitation bath 26.

The cellulose casing 25 is then transported, via rollers 42, 44, 46, through multiple wash tanks 48 and, via rollers 50, 52, 54, 56, through plasticiser tank 58.

35 In Figure 2, there is shown the improved cellulose tubular film production apparatus. The apparatus in Figure

2 is exactly the same as that of Figure 1 in the precipitation bath 126, multiple wash tanks 148 and plasticiser tank 158. However, after the plasticiser tank 158 the wet casing is sequentially transported through a dryer and a rehumidifier wherein there are further sets of nip rolls 160, 162 and a second bubble 164.

In the first bubble 129, to obtain radial strength the tubular cellulose casing 125 is inflated (i.e. pressurised in the region between the extrusion die 124 and the precipitation bath 126). To obtain longitudinal strength, the tubular cellulose casing 125 is pulled longitudinally by nip rolls 134. The tubular cellulose casing 125 is longitudinally stretched by means of nip rolls 134 which rotate faster than the rate of extrusion. The tubular cellulose casing 125 is radially stretched by using increased air pressure in bubble 129. Air may be used as the expansion gas. In the case of cellulose, stretch from regeneration or precipitation applied to the first bubble 129 is usually about 1:1.1 to 1:4 in the radial direction and 1:1.1 to 1:10 in the longitudinal direction.

After regeneration and/or solvent removal, the tubular cellulose casing 125 is washed in wash tanks 148 and plasticised in plasticiser tanks 158.

Additional improvements to the strength and membrane properties of the tubular cellulose casing 125 are then obtained by using a second bubble 164. As shown in Figure 2, the second bubble 164 is captured between a pair of driven nip rolls 160, 162. In the second bubble 164, further radial and longitudinal stretching is applied prior to and during drying. Pressurised air, ranging from 50 to 800mbar, is fed into bubble 164. This second bubble 164 will improve the strength and membrane properties. Tension distribution will also be balanced by the second bubble 164.

The radial stretch applied to the second bubble 164 is in the range of 1:1 to 1:4. The longitudinal stretch, as applied simultaneously, is in the range of 1:1 to 1:4.

5 The type of crystallin orientation obtained in the tubular cellulose casing 125 is dependent on the direction of the stretch i.e. the machine direction orientation (MDO) obtained by the extrusion velocity and the nip rolls 134, 160, 162 and the transverse direction orientation (TDO) obtained by the air pressurisation in the bubbles 129, 164.

10 The dry flat width (DFW) is defined as the lay-flat width of the dried reel stock. The wet flat width (WFW) is defined as the lay-flat width of the wet tube prior to drying. The ratio of dry flat width to wet flat width is called radial drier stretch (RDS). Depending on the  
15 radial dryer stretch (RDS), the orientation and strength properties of the dried cellulose tube may be varied.

The machine direction orientation (MDO) in the second bubble 164 is obtained by applying a different speed to the nip rolls 160, 162. Nip rolls 160 rotate slightly slower  
20 than nip rolls 162 so that a longitudinal tension is obtained in the tubular casing 125.

The longitudinal drier stretch (LDS) is defined as the ratio of inlet speed (Vw) to outlet speed (Vd). Suitable ratios range from 1:1 to 1:4.

25 After drying, the biaxially stretched tubular cellulose casing 125 is rolled onto a winder 166.

Figure 3 shows an NMMO-cellulose dope processing unit wherein three bubbles 229, 264, 268 are used to stretch the cellulose casing 225. Figures 4, 5 and 6 represent  
30 different conditions for the second 264 and third bubble 268.

Figure 4 shows the second bubble 229a, in a wet condition, being stretched in the machine direction orientation (MDO) and in the transverse direction  
35 orientation (TDO). The third bubble 268a is relaxed or

fixated by reducing the pressure in a drying zone.

Figure 5 shows the second bubble 229b, in a wet condition, being stretched in the machine direction orientation (MDO) and in the transverse direction orientation (TDO). The third bubble 268b is further stretched in the machine direction orientation (MDO) and transverse direction orientation (TDO) during drying, by increasing the pressure in the bubble 268b.

Figure 6 shows the second bubble 229c being dried first of all and then stretched. The third bubble 268c is rewetted and stretched by increasing the air pressure.

The use of a second and/or third stretching bubble allows the final properties of the tubular cellulose casing to be modified. Stretching in a longitudinal dryer is advantageous as this improves biaxial orientation and allows thinner films to be produced.

Optionally, after drying, the biaxially stretched tubular casings 125;225 are slit into multiple longitudinal strips for the manufacture of multiple seamed food casings. These seamed food casings have a much smaller diameter than the seamless tubular film 125;225. The slits are parallel to the machine direction orientation (MDO).

As shown in Figures 7, 8 and 9 each strip of film has parallel longitudinal edges 312; 412; 512. The parallel longitudinal edges 312; 412; 512 are curved towards each other about a longitudinal axis 314; 414; 514 so that the edges are proximate to each other to form a tube 310; 410; 510. The edges 312; 412; 512 may abut (Figure 7), overlap (Figure 8) or be face-to-face (Figure 9). The longitudinal edge 312; is sealed together either directly or by means of a sealing tape 316. When the edges 312 are sealed together in face-to-face (Figure 9) orientation, the resultant seam protrudes, generally radially, from the formed tube 510. The advantage of slitting the larger diameter tubular casing 125 is that much smaller tubular

casings 310; 410; 510 with uniform construction may be obtained.

As shown in Figure 10, another possibility is to wind the longitudinal strips, obtained by slitting, in a helical form. A tubular seamed casing 610 may then be built up with one or more layers. Some of the layers may be wound in opposite directions. Alternatively, all of the layers are wound in the same direction. The winding pitch may also be altered to provide a positive, negative or no overlap. The winding angle may range from 0 degrees to 90 degrees. The layer to form the casing 610 may be made of flat, opened and slit tubular film. Alternatively, the casing 610 is formed from a flattened tubular film. The width of the flat film may vary from the thickness of the flat film to several millimetres.

As shown in Figure 11, a spiral wound tube 710 has a circular cross-section and is commonly called the winding diameter. The winding diameter can vary from 10mm to 300mm. By varying the winding pitch, winding diameter and winding width it is possible to alter the properties of the obtained tube. For example, it is possible to stiffen the tube in one direction and at the same time increase the flexibility in the opposite direction. Another possibility is to use extremely thin casings in a multilayer principle. Layers with different properties may be wound on top of each other to produce casings with different skin behaviour.

The seal 612 is achieved via any suitable means or methods. For example, heat sealing or an adhesive such as an acrylate adhesive is used e.g. methyl methacrylate or cyanoacrylate. When the seal is a heat seal, and the base film is a cellulose film, the film is coated with a heat sealing polymeric material such as polyvinylidene chloride.

The finished seamed tubular food casing 310; 410; 510; 610, as shown in Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10, may be collected

on a reel for later use in, for example, food stuffing operations. In food stuffing operations, lengths of food casings are radially folded and longitudinally compressed to form shirred strands for placement over a food stuffing  
5 horn in a subsequent stuffing operation. The unique characteristic of the food casing of the present invention is that it may be formed immediately prior to stuffing which permits a continuous food stuffing operation not obtainable with real stock or shirred strands.

10 It is to be understood that usual treatments may be applied to the casings of the invention either before formation of the seamed tube or subsequent to such formation. Examples of such treatments include peeling  
15 aids, anti-blocking agents; plasticisers; crimping; colourants such as food approval dyes or smoke; heat sealing coatings; flavourings such as smoke and vapour; moisture barrier coatings and laminations.

The seamed casings of the present invention when properly biaxially stretched have good dimensional  
20 stability both radially and longitudinally, even when stuffed with wet food products. The casings of the present invention will radially shrink with contained food product as the food product temperature rises. The casings  
25 will also retain a consistent longitudinal dimension even when a finished stuffed product is hung by one end of the casing.

EXAMPLE 1:

Solutions were prepared with a laboratory mixer with 9.5% cellulose was mixed with 2% (w.r.t. cellulose) propylgallate. The propylgallate acts as a stabiliser.

5       The chopped cellulose pulp was preprocessed with a water/NMMO mixture of 50%. The temperature was increased to 95°C while simultaneously applying a vacuum of 50 to 80 mbar. This caused the NMMO concentration in the solvent to increase up to about 88%. The NMMO concentration was  
10       determined with a refractometer and the complete dissolution of the cellulose pulp was checked by polarisation microscopy.

A cellulose film was extruded according to Fig 1. An extrusion die with a nozzle diameter of 22 mm was used.  
15       The extrusion temperature was 100°C. The extruded cellulose tubular casing was washed to remove the NMMO solvent. The washed samples were not plasticised before drying. The machine direction orientation (MDO) in extrusion was 1:4. Two films were produced with different  
20       extrusion transverse direction orientation (TDO). Sample A has a transverse direction orientation (TDO) of 1:1.6 and Sample B has a transverse direction orientation (TDO) of 1:1.8.

Both samples were dried using a radial dryer stretch  
25       (RDS) of 1:1.6 and longitudinal dryer stretch (LDS) of 1:1.15

Both samples were analysed, in the dried and rewet condition, for break stress and maximum elasticity modulus on a Zwick stress/strain tester.

30       The tensile measurements were performed on a universal testing machine Zwick Z 020 along the procedures of EN ISO 527-3 using the cross-head position to monitor the strain. Table 1 shows the influence of extrusion transverse orientation on the break stress of the formed dry films.

35       Table 1 shows that increasing the TDO will increase

the break stress of the resulting cellulose film, especially in the transverse directions.

Besides the stress at the breaking point, the dry modulus is also very important for sausage packaging films. The modulus is a measure of the stiffness and was determined as the maximum derivative of the whole stress-strain curve.

Table 2 shows the maximum elasticity modulus for both samples after drying. Table 2 shows that increasing the transverse direction orientation (TDO) in the first bubble (i.e. between the extrusion die and the precipitation bath) increases the transverse elasticity modulus. As the tube is blown up, the tube increases in the radial direction, with the resultant film becoming stiffer in the transverse direction.

#### EXAMPLE 2:

A cellulose film was produced according to the double bubble principle of Fig 2. The dope prepared was similar to Example 1. Example 2 shows the influence of using a second bubble on the formed film.

In this Example, the forces applied to the first bubble were kept constant and three different radial dryer stretch ratios were applied to the second bubble. The transverse direction orientation (TDO) in the first bubble was 1:1.6 and the machine direction orientation (MDO) was 1:3. The film was precipitated, washed and not plasticized before drying.

Three samples C, D and E were produced with respectively 1:1.35 ; 1:1.46 and 1:1.53 radial dryer stretch (RDS). The longitudinal dryer stretch was kept constant at 1:1.15. Table 3 shows the influence of varying radial dryer stretch on break stress of the dried samples.

From Table 3 it can be concluded that increased radial

dryer stretch (RDS) increases the transverse direction (TD) break stress of the dried film.

5 Samples C, D and E were rewetted with water after drying and the break stress was measured in the rewet condition. The rewetting involved immersing the dried samples for fifteen minutes in a water bath at room temperature.

10 Table 4 shows the stress results for the rewet samples. From Table 4 it can be concluded that increased radial dryer stretch (RDS) increases the transverse direction (TD) break stress of the rewetted film.

Table 5 shows the maximum modulus of samples C, D and E in the dried condition.

15 From Table 5 it can be concluded that the maximum transverse elasticity modulus will increase with increased radial dryer stretch.

Table 6 shows the maximum modulus of samples C, D and E in the rewetted condition.

20 From Tables 5 and 6 it can be seen that the maximum transverse elasticity modulus in a dried and rewet condition is dependent on the transverse orientation conditions of the second bubble. As more transverse orientation forces are applied on the second bubble the modulus will increase in that direction.

25 EXAMPLE 3 :

30 The influence of the machine direction orientation (MDO) in the first bubble will now be illustrated. The preparation of the cellulose NMMO dope was similar to that of Example 1 and Example 2. Two samples F and G were produced. In the first bubble, a transverse direction orientation (TDO) of 1:1.6 was used in both samples. A varying machine direction orientation (MDO) of 1:3 was used for sample F and a varying machine direction orientation (MDO) of 1:4 was used for sample G. Both samples were

precipitated, washed and not plasticized as described in Example 1. Afterwards the film was dried using the same radial dryer stretch of 1:1.53 and the same longitudinal dryer stretch of 1:1.15.

5           Table 7 shows the strength of samples F and G in the dried condition.

Table 8 shows the strength of samples F and G in the rewet condition.

10           From Table 7 and 8 it can be concluded that the stress at break in the machine direction will increase with increased machine direction orientation (MDO) in the first bubble.

Table 9 shows the strain at break of samples F and G in the dried condition.

15           Table 10 shows the strain at break of samples F and G in a rewet condition.

20           From the above Examples, it can be seen that the strength characteristics of the dried and rewet film may be adjusted by the forces applied to the first and second bubbles.

#### EXAMPLE 4 :

25           A new set of experiments was conducted by extruding dope containing 9.5% cellulose and applying different transverse direction orientation (TDO) and machine direction orientation (MDO) in the extrusion bubble and in the dryer bubble. The influence on the membrane properties were investigated. The membrane properties were determined by measuring the permeation of  $K_3Fe(CN)_6$  1% solution at 20°C through the formed cellulose film sample with a membrane  
30           area of 15.92 cm<sup>2</sup>.

The results of the permeation measurements are shown in Table 11.

The permeability of the cellulose film depends on the stretch applied during the formation process and with

regard to Table 11 we may conclude that the permeability will decrease with increasing stretch.

Table 1 :

		MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	MD stress (Mpa)	TD stress (Mpa)
5	Sample A :	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:16	165	149
	Sample B :	1:4	1:1.8	1:1.15	1:16	176	189

MDO = Machine Direction Orientation in the first bubble  
(extrusion draw ratio)

10 TDO = Transverse Direction Orientation in the first bubble  
(extrusion blow up ratio)

LDS = Longitudinal Dryer Stretch (dryer length direction  
draw)

RDS = Radial Dryer Stretch (dryer radial direction blow up)

Table 2 :

		MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	MD modulus (Mpa)	TD modulus (Mpa)
15	Sample A :	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.6	8480	4910
	Sample B :	1:4	1:1.8	1:1.15	1:1.6	8150	6380

Table 3 : dry stress at break results

20

		MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	MD stress (Mpa)	TD stress (Mpa)
	Sample C:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.35	156	131
	Sample D:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.46	160	140
25	Sample E:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	154	169

Table 4: rewet stress at break results

		MD stress		TD stress	
	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	
					(Mpa) (Mpa)
Sample C:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.35	22 18
5 Sample D:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.46	19 17
Sample E:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	21 22

Table 5 : dry maximum elastic modulus

		MD Modulus		TD Modulus	
	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	
					(Mpa) (Mpa)
Sample C:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.35	9310 5000
Sample D:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.46	9210 5410
Sample E:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	8950 7120

Table 6 : rewet maximum elastic modulus

		MD		MD	
	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	
					Modulus Modulus
					(Mpa) (Mpa)
Sample C:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.35	138 78
20 Sample D:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.46	131 80
Sample E:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	123 113

Table 7 : dry stress at break

		MD		TD	
	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	
					Stress Stress
					(MPa) (MPa)
Sample F:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	154 169
Sample G:	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	165 149

Table 8 : rewet stress at break

						MD	TD
						Stress	Stress
						(Mpa)	(Mpa)
5	Sample F:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	21	22
	Sample G:	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	23	23

Table 9 : strain at break dry condition.

					MD	TD
10					strain	strain
	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	(%)	(%)
Sample F :	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	18	24
Sample G :	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	21	28

15 Table 10 : rewet strain at break

					MD	TD	
					strain	strain	
					(%)	(%)	
	Sample F:	1:3	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	48	59
20	Sample G:	1:4	1:1.6	1:1.15	1:1.53	42	78

Table 11 : Permeation values

						Permeation value
	Sample ID	MDO	TDO	LDS	RDS	mg $\mu$ m ml/(min cm <sup>2</sup> g)
	0804/T1	1:2.5	1:1.27	1:1.10	1:1	425
25	0804/T2	1:2.5	1:1.27	1:1.14	1:1	433
	0805/T1	1:2.5	1:1.45	1:1.10	1:1	375
	0805/T2	1:2.5	1:1.45	1:1.14	1:1	385
	0807/T1	1:3	1:1.27	1:1.10	1:1	380

	0807/T2	1:3	1:1.25	1:1.14	1:1	375
	0814/T1	1:4	1:1.27	1:1.14	1:1.05	340
	0814/T2	1:4	1:1.25	1:1.14	1:1.25	345
	0816/T1	1:4	1:1.42	1:1.14	1:1.25	340
5	0816/T2	1:4	1:1.42	1:1.14	1:1.33	320
	0809/T1	1:5	1:1.27	1:1.10	1:1	390
	0809/T2	1:5	1:1.27	1:1.14	1:1	360
	0809/T3	1:5	1:1.27	1:1.14	1:21	320
	0809/T4	1:5	1:1.27	1:1.10	1:21	300
10	0813/T1	1:5	1:1.45	1:1.14	1:1	250

CLAIMS

1. A method for producing biaxially stretched extruded cellulose based tubular film wherein the tubular film is extruded from an extrusion die and sequentially transporting the tubular film through a liquid precipitation bath and a dryer, said method comprising the steps of:

10 locating the extrusion die above the liquid precipitation bath having a precipitation liquid level therein to provide a gap between an extrusion nozzle outlet of the extrusion die and the surface of the precipitation liquid in the liquid bath;

15 extruding a blown tubular film from the extrusion die so that a bubble is formed in the gap between the extrusion nozzle outlet and the liquid precipitation bath and wherein there is increased air pressure within the bubble;

20 pulling the tubular film away from the extrusion die and into the precipitation bath using a set of rollers;

precipitating the blown tubular film in said liquid precipitation bath; and

25 wherein the film is transported via further sets of rollers to form at least one further bubble, between a set of rollers, where the tubular film is further stretched to impart additional strength to the film.

30 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the tubular film is cellulose based and is formed by adding cellulose to a water diluted NMMO solution to form a suspension, wherein the suspension is heated and the water evaporated under reduced pressure to form NMMO monohydrate which

dissolves the cellulose to form a dope solution containing cellulose, NMMO-monohydrate and water.

3. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein nip rolls are used to stretch the tubular film.

5 4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the nip rolls terminating the first bubble rotate faster than the rate of extrusion from the extrusion die so that there is a longitudinal tension in the tubular cellulose film.

10 5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the air pressure in the first bubble is 0.1 to 5mbar.

6. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein a second bubble in the tubular film is formed after it has been washed in wash tanks and plasticiser tanks.

15 7. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the film is formed into three bubbles prior to being wound on a drum.

20 8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the second bubble in a wet condition is stretched by nip rolls longitudinally and radially by increased air pressure; and in the third bubble the pressure inside the film is increased.

25 9. A method according to claim 7, wherein the second bubble in a wet condition is stretched by nip rolls longitudinally and radially by increased air pressure; and in the third bubble the pressure inside the film is decreased.

10. A method according to claim 7, wherein the second

bubble is dried and stretched longitudinally by increased air pressure; and the third bubble is rewetted and further stretched between nip rolls and by using increased air pressure.

5

11. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the second bubble has a set of nip rolls at both ends of the bubble and wherein the set of nip rolls first in contact with the tubular film rotate slower than the second set of nip rolls whereby a longitudinal tension is created in the film.

10

12. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein a holding/accumulator tank is located between each set of rollers.

15

13. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the air pressure inside the second bubble is 50 to 800mbar.

20

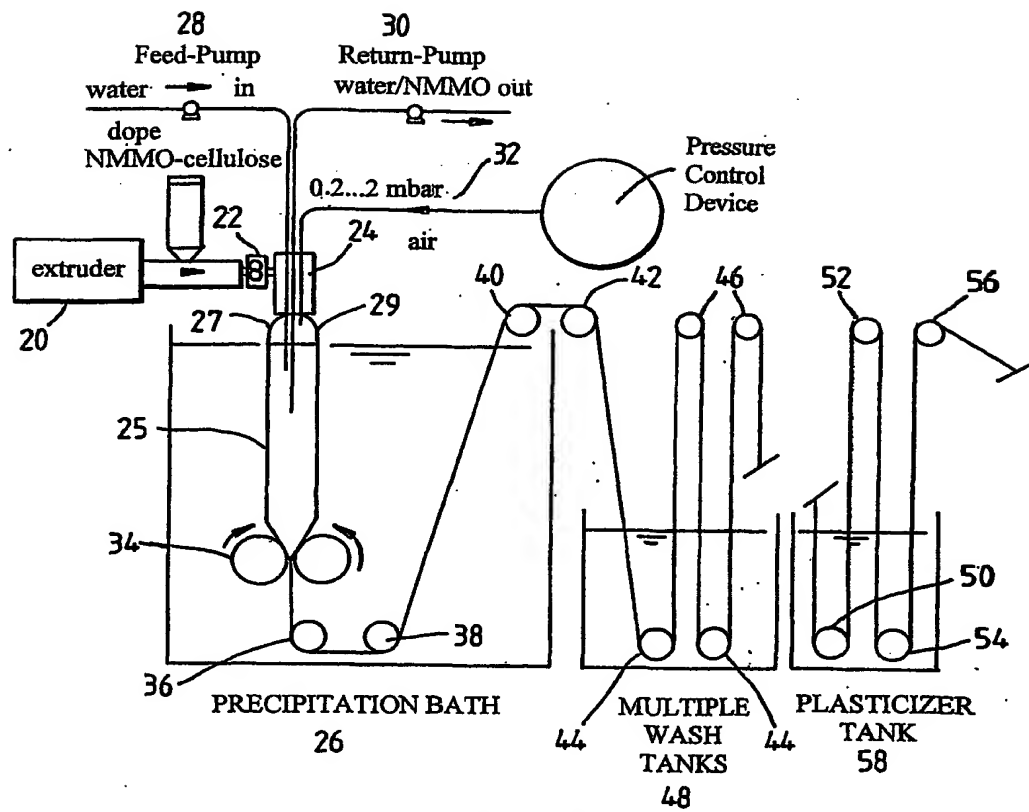
14. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the tube is stretched by a total of 20-1500% in the longitudinal direction and 20-2000% in the transverse direction.

25

15. Apparatus for producing biaxially stretched extruded cellulose based tubular film of improved strength wherein the apparatus comprises an extrusion die above a liquid bath having a liquid level therein to provide a gap between the die and the surface of the liquid in the liquid bath wherein the film is extruded into a first bubble and pulled via a set of rollers and wherein the film undergoes a process of being pulled through further rollers between which film bubbles are formed which exert further biaxial forces on the tubular film.

30

16. Apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the rollers are nip rolls.
17. A biaxially stretched tubular cellulose based film, according to any of claims 1 to 14.
- 5 18. A biaxially stretched tubular cellulose film according to claim 17, wherein the tubular cellulose based film is cut into a plurality of biaxially stretched strips and the biaxially stretched strips are seamed to form a smaller dimensioned tubular film.
- 10 19. A biaxially stretched tubular cellulose film according to claim 18, wherein the seams are formed by using tape such as adhesive tape, heat sealing tape or any other suitable adhesive means.
- 15 20. A biaxially stretched tubular cellulose film according to any of claims 18 and 19, wherein the cuts are parallel with a longitudinal axis of the formed tubular film.
21. A biaxially stretched tubular cellulose film according to any of claims 18 and 19, wherein the cuts are helical with respect to the formed tubular film.



**Fig. 1**

2/6

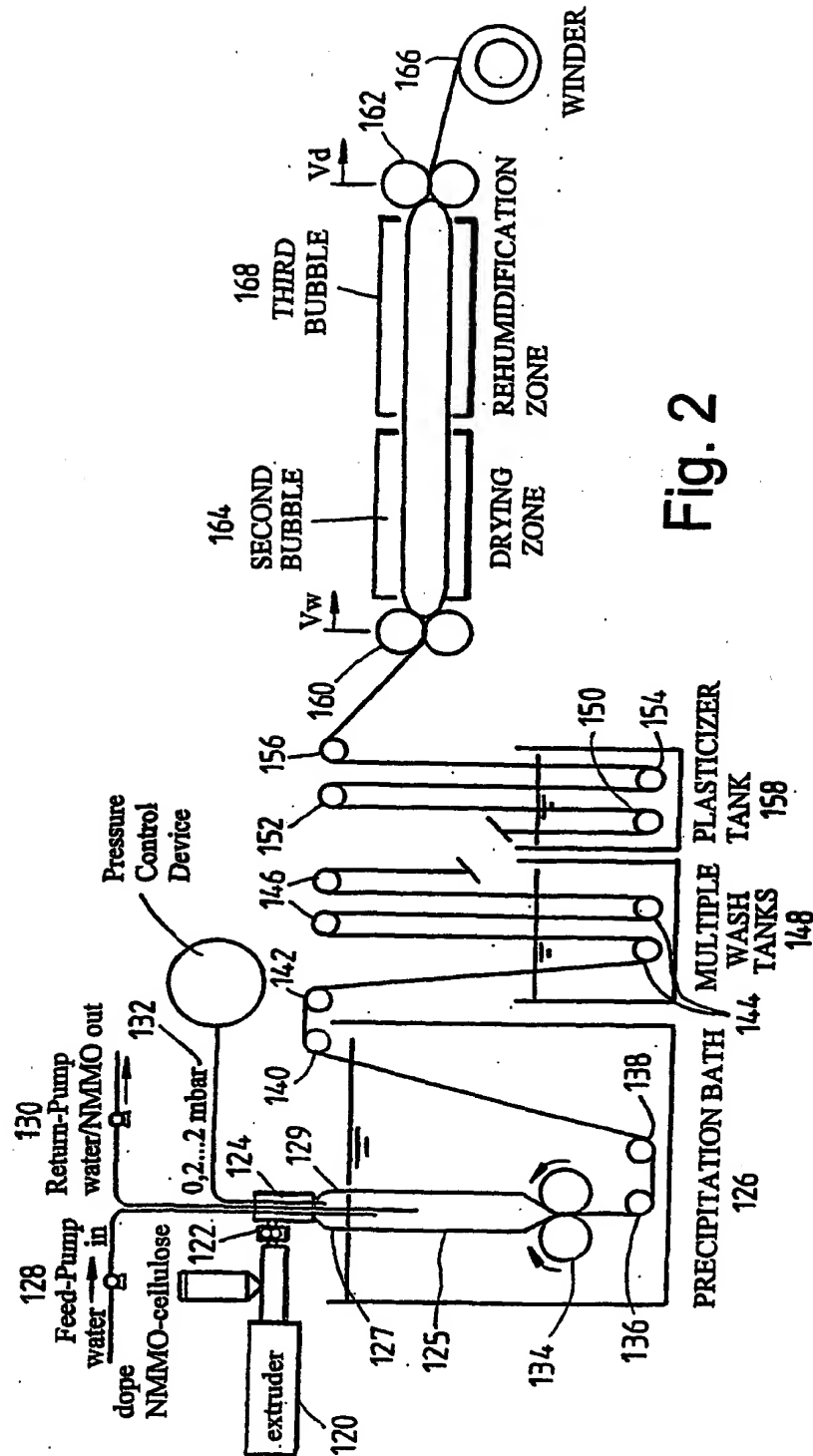


Fig. 2

3/6

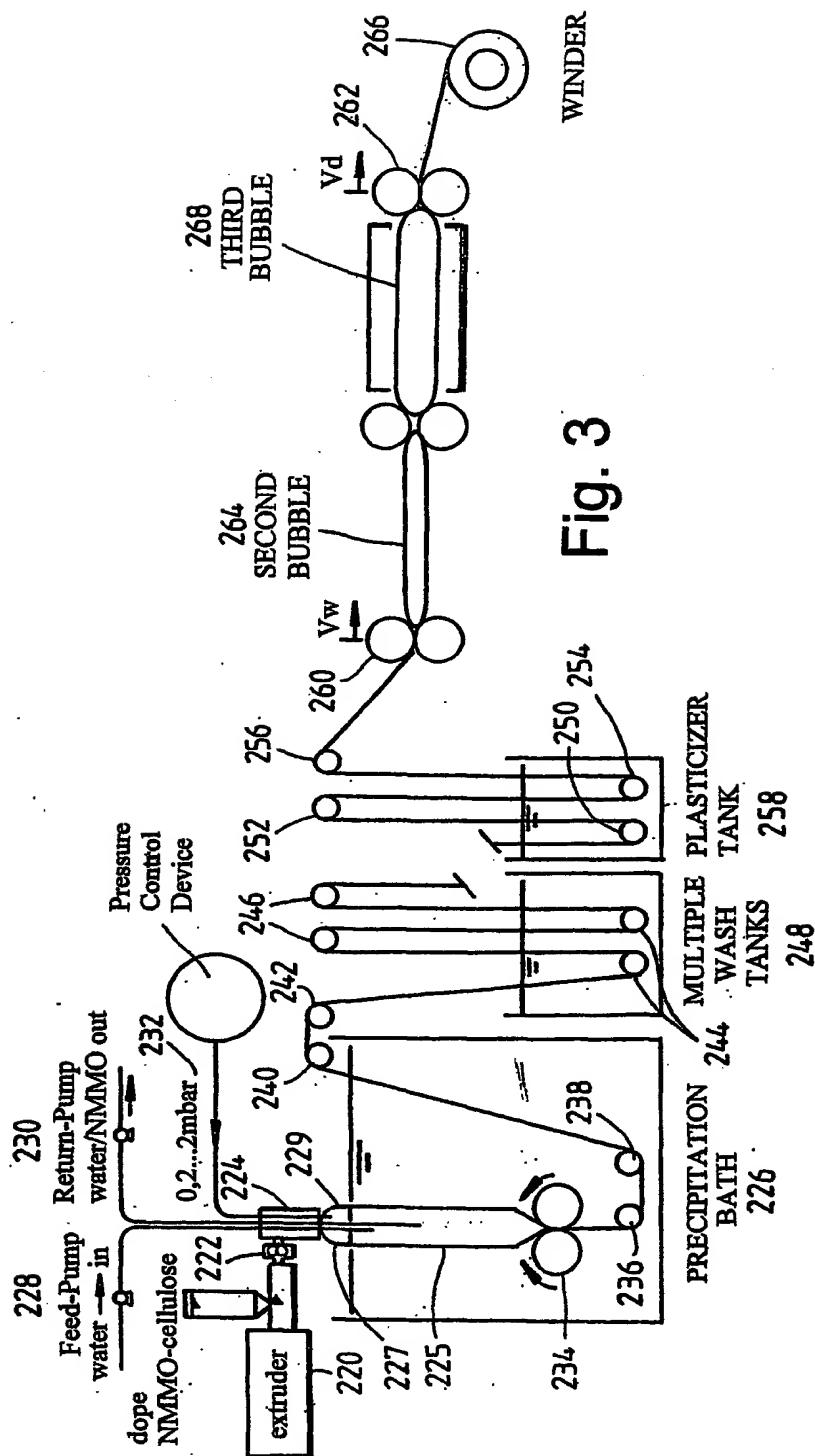
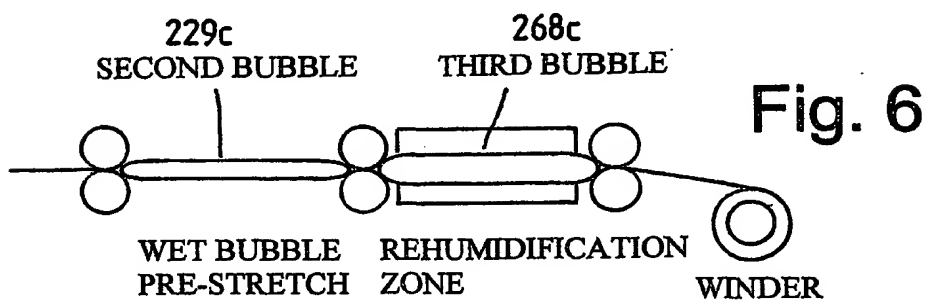
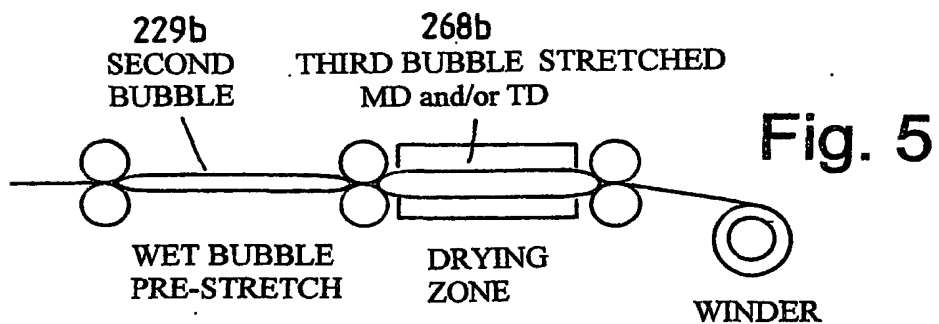
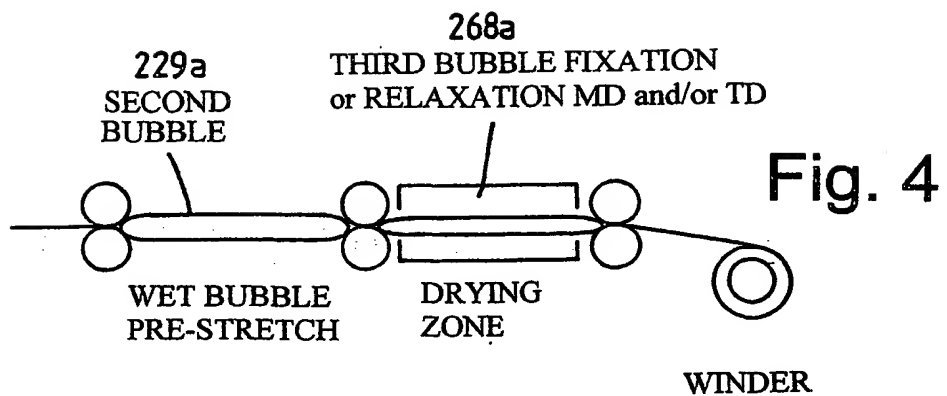


Fig. 3

4/6



5/6

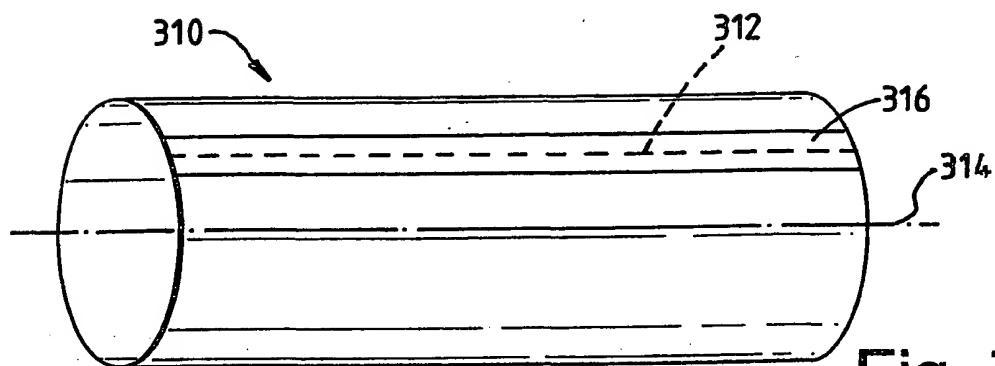


Fig. 7

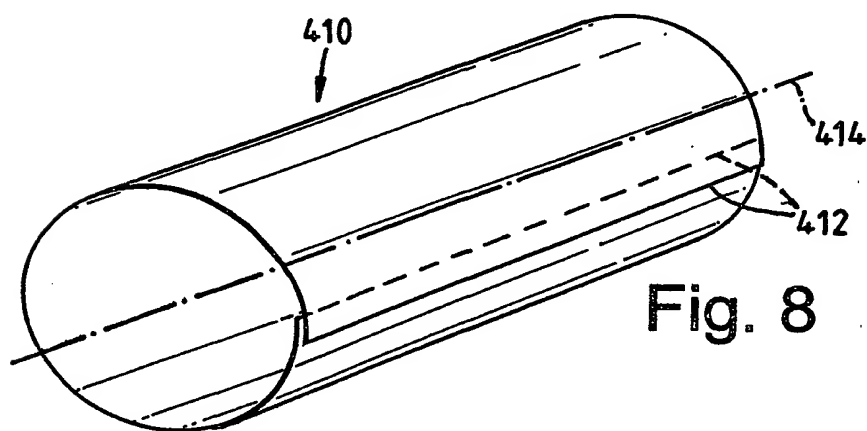


Fig. 8

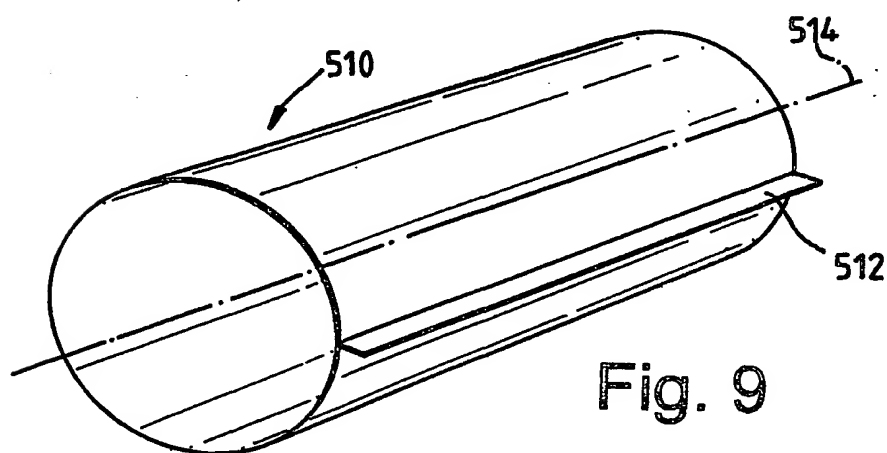
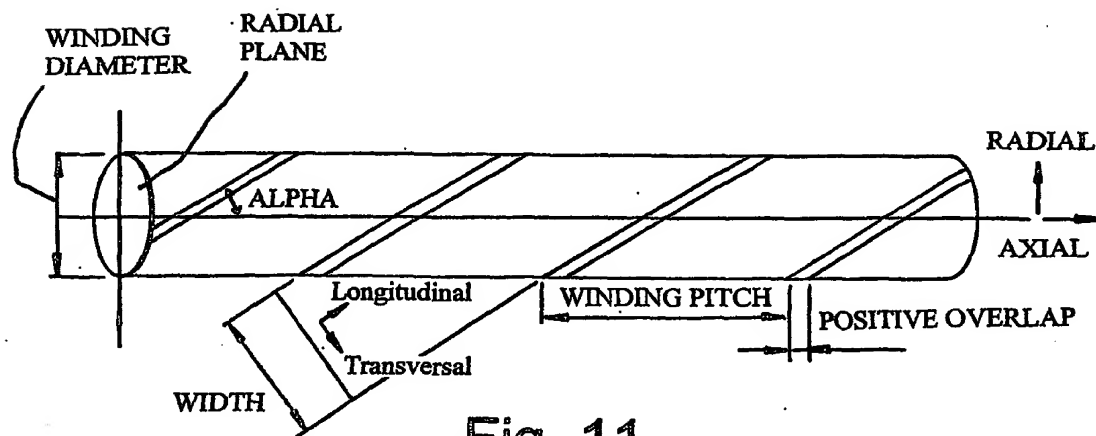
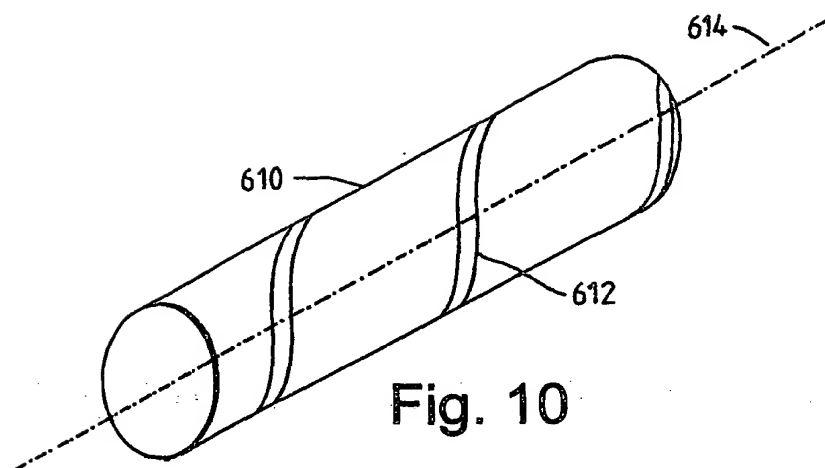


Fig. 9

6/6



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. national Application No

PCT/GB 01/00851

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
 IPC 7 B29C47/00 B29C55/28 B29C69/00 //B29K1:00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B29C A22C

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

WPI Data, PAJ, EPO-Internal

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 97 31970 A (HAMMER KLAUS DIETER ; BERGHOF KLAUS (DE); GORD HERBERT (DE); GROLIG) 4 September 1997 (1997-09-04)	1-6, 15-17
Y	page 8, line 10 - line 37; claim 1	7-10, 18-20
X	US 5 451 364 A (KAJIWARA EDWARD M ET AL) 19 September 1995 (1995-09-19) column 6, line 16 - line 32 column 10, line 34 - line 49	1-5, 11-17
X	EP 0 958 743 A (TEEPAK INVESTMENT INC) 24 November 1999 (1999-11-24) example 7	1, 15, 17
X	EP 0 960 566 A (TEEPAK INVESTMENT INC) 1 December 1999 (1999-12-01) example 1	1, 15, 17
	--- -/-	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

## \* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"Z" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

4 July 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

12/07/2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2  
 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk  
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,  
 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Van Nieuwenhuize, O

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No.

PCT/GB 01/00851

## C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4 612 245 A (SCHOENBERG JULIAN H ET AL) 16 September 1986 (1986-09-16) figure 1	15,16
Y	WO 96 07328 A (HOECHST DO BRASIL QUIMICA E FA ;SCHULTZE HARTMUT PAUL (BR); HARM B) 14 March 1996 (1996-03-14) claim 1; figure 1	7-10
Y	EP 0 922 390 A (DEVRO TEEPAC BELGIUM NV) 16 June 1999 (1999-06-16) paragraph '0014!; claims 20-24; figures 1-3	18-20
A	WO 95 35340 A (FRAUNHOFER GES FORSCHUNG ;WEIGEL PETER (DE); FINK HANS PETER (DE);) 28 December 1995 (1995-12-28) claims 1,12,15	1,15,17
A	WO 93 13670 A (VISKASE CORP ;COURTAULDS FIBRES LTD (GB)) 22 July 1993 (1993-07-22) claim 1	1,15,17
A	EP 0 899 076 A (KALLE NALO GMBH & CO KG) 3 March 1999 (1999-03-03) claim 1	1,15,17
A	GB 1 002 752 A (DU PONT) 25 August 1965 (1965-08-25) figure 1	1
A	US 2 999 756 A (E.A. SHINER ET AL) 12 September 1961 (1961-09-12) claims 1,3,5; figure 1	1
A	US 4 590 107 A (BRIDGEFORD DOUGLAS J) 20 May 1986 (1986-05-20) example 1	1
A	WO 96 34037 A (MICHELS CHRISTOPH ;BERGHOF KLAUS (DE); THUERINGISCHES INST TEXTIL) 31 October 1996 (1996-10-31) claim 1	1
A	US 5 248 366 A (RASMUSSEN OLE-BENDT) 28 September 1993 (1993-09-28) claim 1	21
A	US 4 809 413 A (UPMEIER HARTMUT) 7 March 1989 (1989-03-07) claim 1	21

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet) (July 1992)

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Int. l. Application No

PCT/GB 01/00851

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9731970 A	04-09-1997	DE 19607953 A	04-09-1997
		AT 200502 T	15-04-2001
		DE 59606788 D	17-05-2001
		EP 0883645 A	16-12-1998
US 5451364 A	19-09-1995	US 5277857 A	11-01-1994
		AT 194455 T	15-07-2000
		DE 69425240 D	17-08-2000
		DE 69425240 T	25-01-2001
		EP 0662283 A	12-07-1995
		ES 2147772 T	01-10-2000
		US 5658524 A	19-08-1997
		AT 148306 T	15-02-1997
		AU 654080 B	20-10-1994
		AU 3321993 A	03-08-1993
		BR 9205562 A	26-04-1994
		CA 2096143 A	18-07-1993
		DE 69217211 D	13-03-1997
		DE 69217211 T	17-07-1997
		DK 577790 T	11-08-1997
		EP 0577790 A	12-01-1994
		ES 2096908 T	16-03-1997
		FI 934067 A	16-09-1993
		JP 2568156 B	25-12-1996
		JP 6508038 T	14-09-1994
		MX 9300227 A	29-07-1994
		WO 9313670 A	22-07-1993
		US H1592 H	03-09-1996
		US 5597587 A	28-01-1997
		US 5702783 A	30-12-1997
EP 0958743 A	24-11-1999	US 6177158 B	23-01-2001
		BR 9806670 A	20-03-2001
		CN 1235901 A	24-11-1999
		JP 11320675 A	24-11-1999
EP 0960566 A	01-12-1999	US 5989605 A	23-11-1999
US 4612245 A	16-09-1986	AT 22544 T	15-10-1986
		AU 547933 B	14-11-1985
		AU 8449882 A	03-02-1983
		BR 8203761 A	21-06-1983
		CA 1198561 A	31-12-1985
		DE 3273558 D	06-11-1986
		DK 342582 A,B,	01-02-1983
		EP 0071349 A	09-02-1983
		FI 822676 A,B,	01-02-1983
		JP 1614268 C	15-08-1991
		JP 2033510 B	27-07-1990
		JP 58027725 A	18-02-1983
		NO 822626 A	01-02-1983
		NZ 200767 A	11-04-1986
		ZA 8203874 A	28-09-1983
WO 9607328 A	14-03-1996	BR 9403440 A	03-09-1996
		AU 3559295 A	27-03-1996
		CZ 9700657 A	15-10-1997
		EP 0779781 A	25-06-1997

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 01/00851

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
EP 0922390	A	16-06-1999	JP 11240566	A	07-09-1999
WO 9535340	A	28-12-1995	DE 4421482	A	21-12-1995
			EP 0766709	A	09-04-1997
			JP 10501570	T	10-02-1998
			US 6113842	A	05-09-2000
WO 9313670	A	22-07-1993	US 5277857	A	11-01-1994
			AT 148306	T	15-02-1997
			AU 654080	B	20-10-1994
			AU 3321993	A	03-08-1993
			BR 9205562	A	26-04-1994
			CA 2096143	A	18-07-1993
			DE 69217211	D	13-03-1997
			DE 69217211	T	17-07-1997
			DK 577790	T	11-08-1997
			EP 0577790	A	12-01-1994
			ES 2096908	T	16-03-1997
			FI 934067	A	16-09-1993
			JP 2568156	B	25-12-1996
			JP 6508038	T	14-09-1994
			MX 9300227	A	29-07-1994
			US 5451364	A	19-09-1995
			US H1592	H	03-09-1996
			US 5597587	A	28-01-1997
			US 5658524	A	19-08-1997
			US 5702783	A	30-12-1997
EP 0899076	A	03-03-1999	DE 19737113	A	04-03-1999
			US 6033618	A	07-03-2000
GB 1002752	A	25-08-1965	DE 1272527	B	
US 2999756	A	12-09-1961	NONE		
US 4590107	A	20-05-1986	BR 8205335	A	14-12-1982
			CA 1180939	A	15-01-1985
			DE 3274412	D	15-01-1987
			EP 0070891	A	09-02-1983
			FI 68345	B	31-05-1985
			HU 185096	B	28-11-1984
			JP 4012931	B	06-03-1992
			JP 58500004	T	06-01-1983
			WO 8202649	A	19-08-1982
			YU 25182	A	30-06-1985
WO 9634037	A	31-10-1996	DE 19515137	A	31-10-1996
US 5248366	A	28-09-1993	AT 132794	T	15-01-1996
			AU 639210	B	22-07-1993
			AU 3858189	A	12-01-1990
			AU 4185893	A	30-09-1993
			BR 8907512	A	11-06-1991
			CN 1040537	A, B	21-03-1990
			CN 1027356	B	11-01-1995
			DE 68925424	D	22-02-1996
			DE 68925424	T	14-08-1996
			DK 301490	A	22-02-1991

Form PCT/ISA/210 (patent family annex) (July 1992)

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 01/00851

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5248366 A		EP 0426702 A	15-05-1991
		WO 8912533 A	28-12-1989
		NO 178692 B	05-02-1996
		NO 942349 A	14-02-1991
		RU 2087301 C	20-08-1997
		RU 2027602 C	27-01-1995
		US 5361469 A	08-11-1994
US 4809413 A	07-03-1989	DE 3616666 A	15-10-1987
		AT 139932 T	15-07-1996
		CA 1315532 A	06-04-1993
		CN 87103204 A,B	09-12-1987
		DE 3645194 C	05-01-1995
		DK 191387 A	15-10-1987
		EP 0245643 A	19-11-1987
		EP 0494091 A	08-07-1992
		JP 63047092 A	27-02-1988
		RU 2062233 C	20-06-1996
		SU 1782209 A	15-12-1992
		US RE34328 E	03-08-1993

# PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

# PCT

To:  
**PAULEY PETERSEN KINNE & FEJER**  
 Attn. Rauch, Melanie I.  
 2800 West Higgins Road, Suite 365  
 Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195  
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INVITATION TO PAY ADDITIONAL FEES

(PCT Article 17(3)(a) and Rule 40.1)

Applicant's or agent's file reference <b>14912      <i>KCC-1103-PCT</i></b>	Date of mailing (day/month/year) <b>25/09/2002</b>
International application No. <b>PCT/US 02/ 11283</b>	International filing date (day/month/year) <b>09/04/2002</b>
Applicant  <b>KIMBERLY-CLARK WORLDWIDE, INC.</b>	

**1. This International Searching Authority**

- (i) considers that there are 3 (number of) inventions claimed in the international application covered by the claims indicated ~~XXXX~~ on the extra sheet:

and it considers that the international application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention (Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3) for the reasons indicated ~~XXXX~~ on the extra sheet:

DOCKETED

DATE 10-7-02 09 Nov 2002

ATTORNEY \_\_\_\_\_

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_

*Pay Add'l Fee*

- (ii) ☒ has carried out a partial international search (see Annex) ☐ will establish the international search report on those parts of the international application which relate to the invention first mentioned in claims Nos.:

**3, 4, 7, 10-12, 21-23**

- (iii) will establish the international search report on the other parts of the international application only if, and to the extent to which, additional fees are paid


**2. The applicant is hereby invited, within the time limit indicated above, to pay the amount indicated below:**

EUR 945,00      x      2      =      EUR 1.890,00  
 Fee per additional invention      number of additional inventions      total amount of additional fees

Or, \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

The applicant is informed that, according to Rule 40.2(c), the payment of any additional fee may be made under protest, i.e., a reasoned statement to the effect that the international application complies with the requirement of unity of invention or that the amount of the required additional fee is excessive.

3. ☐ Claim(s) Nos. \_\_\_\_\_ have been found to be unsearchable under Article 17(2)(b) because of defects under Article 17(2)(a) and therefore have not been included with any invention.

Name and mailing address of the International Searching Authority  European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer  <b>Sophie Ruciak</b>
--	--

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 3,4,7,10-12,21-23

Film temperatures during the inflation/blowing

1.1. Claim : 7

Multi bubble film blowing

1.2. Claims: 10-12,21-23

Blend of materials used

2. Claims: 16-19

Heating and cooling techniques of the inflated/blown bubble

3. Claims: 26-37

A cross directional oriented film

Please note that all inventions mentioned under item 1, although not necessarily linked by a common inventive concept, could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee.

The prior art DE1164645 discloses double bubble film blow extrusion for a thermoplastic elastomeric heat shrink film (Block polymer of Polyethylene and Butylene or similar). The first bubble is blown to stretch the film in the cross direction and in the length direction, then the film self cools, after a radiation treatment the film is reheated and blown a second time resulting in further stretch in the cross direction and the length direction at a temperature lower than during the first blow, then the film self cools and is collapsed and wound up. The document contains all the technical features of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13-15, 20, 24, 25 and is thereby novelty destroying for those claims, see: column 1, row 1 - row 9; column 5, row 60 - column 6, row 28; column 8, row 6 - row 16; Example 3, claim 1 and 6; figure 2.

Subject 1, concerns claims 3 and 4 and treats:

-Film temperatures during the inflation/blowing

Special technical feature(s) which contribute to the solution of the objective problem:

-Blow temperature above softening temperature and below melt temperature.

-Inflation temperature above glass transition and below softening temperature.

Objective problem :

-How to find the suitable blow and inflation temperature for orientation of the film.

Sections in the description of the application mentioning said problem:

-page 6, paragraph 1

Subject 2, concerns claim 7 and treats:

-Multi bubble film blowing

Special technical feature(s) which contribute to the solution of the

objective problem:

-Inflate/blow the film three times.

Objective problem :

-How to produce ultra thin films.

Sections in the description of the application mentioning said problem:

-page 7, paragraph 3

Subject 3, concerns claims 10-12, 21-23 and treats:

-Blend of materials used

Special technical feature(s) which contribute to the solution of the objective problem:

-65-80% / 20-35% blend ratio of elastomeric resin / polyethylene

Objective problem :

-How to find a suitable material blend for double bubble film blow extrusion of a heat shrink film

Sections in the description of the application mentioning said problem:

-page 11, paragraph 5 - page 6, paragraph 1

Subject 4, concerns claims 16-19 and treats:

-Heating and cooling techniques of the inflated/blown bubble.

Special technical feature(s) which contribute to the solution of the objective problem:

-Use internal bubble cooling system

-Use combined external and internal bubble cooling system

-Use external air cooling ring

-Heat the film while orienting it in the cross direction.

Objective problem :

-How to control the temperature profile of the blown/inflated bubble.

Sections in the description of the application mentioning said problem:

-page 2, paragraph 5

Subject 5, concerns claims 26-37 and treats:

-A cross directional oriented film

Special technical feature(s) which contribute to the solution of the objective problem:

-Latent set of the film is at least 50%

-Tension set is less than about 20%

-Shrinkage of the film is at least 50%

-Draw ratio of the film is at least 10

-Tensile force of the film is at least 30

Objective problem :

-How to find criterias for selecting materials for an optimal balance of performance

Sections in the description of the application mentioning said problem:

-page 10, paragraph 3 - page 11, paragraph 3

The groups of claims are not linked by common or corresponding technical features and define different inventions not linked by a single general inventive concept. The application, hence does not meet the requirements of Unity of Invention as defined in Rule 13.1-2 PCT and Rules 29, 30, 46 EPC.

**Annex to Form PCT/ISA/206  
COMMUNICATION RELATING TO THE RESULTS  
OF THE PARTIAL INTERNATIONAL SEARCH**

International Application No  
**PCT/US 02/11283**

1. The present communication is an Annex to the invitation to pay additional fees (Form PCT/ISA/206). It shows the results of the international search established on the parts of the international application which relate to the invention first mentioned in claims Nos.:
- <sup>3,4</sup>  
2. This communication is not the international search report which will be established according to Article 18 and Rule 43.
3. If the applicant does not pay any additional search fees, the information appearing in this communication will be considered as the result of the international search and will be included as such in the international search report.
4. If the applicant pays additional fees, the international search report will contain both the information appearing in this communication and the results of the international search on other parts of the international application for which such fees will have been paid.

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE 11 64 645 B (GRACE W R & CO) 5 March 1964 (1964-03-05)	1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13-15, 20, 24, 25
Y	column 1, line 1 - line 9  column 5, line 61 - column 6, line 28 column 8, line 6 - line 16 column 9, line 7 - line 35; claims 1, 6; figure 2  ---	3, 4, 7, 10-12, 21-23
X	EP 0 974 452 A (KUREHA CHEMICAL IND CO LTD) 26 January 2000 (2000-01-26)  page 1, line 1 - line 36 page 6, line 37 - page 7, line 5; claim 8; figure 1  ---	1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18-20, 25
Y	GB 1 560 550 A (ICI LTD) 6 February 1980 (1980-02-06) page 1, line 1 - line 20  ---	3, 4
Y	WO 01 70483 A (HENDRIKS IVO G ; VRIJSEN MARK (BE); BECKERS STEFAN D (BE); HELLEMAN) 27 September 2001 (2001-09-27) page 1, line 1 - line 5 page 2, line 16 - line 31 page 4, line 11 - line 16 page 6, line 7 - line 10; figure 5  ---  -/--	7

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

**Annex to Form PCT/ISA/206  
COMMUNICATION RELATING TO THE RESULTS  
OF THE PARTIAL INTERNATIONAL SEARCH**

International Application No  
**PCT/US 02/11283**

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	<p>SONG K ET AL: "DOUBLE BUBBLE TUBULAR FILM EXTRUSION OF POLYBUTYLENE TEREPHTHALATE-POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE BLENDS" POLYMER ENGINEERING &amp; SCIENCE, SOCIETY OF PLASTICS ENGINEERS, US, vol. 40, no. 4, April 2000 (2000-04), pages 902-916, XP000927556 ISSN: 0032-3888 page 902 -page 903</p>	<p>10-12, 21-23</p>
A	<p>US 4 277 578 A (HATA HIDEO ET AL) 7 July 1981 (1981-07-07) abstract column 5, line 16 - line 50 column 22, line 4 -column 23, line 34</p>	<p>10-12, 21-23</p>

# Patent Family Ann x

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 02/11283

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
DE 1164645	B	05-03-1964	NONE
EP 0974452	A	26-01-2000	JP 2000037828 A 08-02-2000 CN 1252348 A 10-05-2000 EP 0974452 A2 26-01-2000
GB 1560550	A	06-02-1980	AU 505932 B2 06-12-1979 AU 3084677 A 31-05-1979 BE 861856 A1 14-06-1978 DE 2755519 A1 15-06-1978 FR 2374154 A1 13-07-1978 US T984006 I4 03-07-1979
WO 0170483	A	27-09-2001	AU 3579501 A 03-10-2001 WO 0170483 A1 27-09-2001
US 4277578	A	07-07-1981	JP 1154978 C 15-07-1983 JP 54155269 A 07-12-1979 JP 57049013 B 19-10-1982 JP 1412766 C 27-11-1987 JP 54155271 A 07-12-1979 JP 62022772 B 20-05-1987 JP 1154961 C 15-07-1983 JP 54055071 A 01-05-1979 JP 57049012 B 19-10-1982 JP 54072279 A 09-06-1979 DE 2844363 A1 12-04-1979 DE 2857641 A1 07-07-1983 DE 2857642 C2 07-07-1983 DE 2858781 C2 17-10-1991 FR 2405972 A1 11-05-1979 FR 2525956 A1 04-11-1983 GB 2007685 A , B 23-05-1979 US 4302557 A 24-11-1981 US 4336350 A 22-06-1982 US 4835218 A 30-05-1989 US 4542886 A 24-09-1985 US 4379888 A 12-04-1983 US 4499241 A 12-02-1985 US 4336212 A 22-06-1982 US 4481334 A 06-11-1984 US 4454303 A 12-06-1984 US RE33832 E 25-02-1992 US 4537935 A 27-08-1985 US 4701496 A 20-10-1987 GB 2063277 A , B 03-06-1981